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A CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIOLOGY OF SECTS

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Like historic Christianity itself, the sects of Christianity owe much to the social conditions of the time and place of their respective origins. They lend themselves to sociological explanation because in large part they were social products. While social changes may throw no light upon the nature of the life-forces which found their expression in the sectarian organizations, certainly the direction which these forces took and the forms they assumed were determined to a large degree by social conditions then current. The organizations, the doctrines as well as the individuals who were members of the sects, bear the stamp of the peculiar social world in which they came into existence.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Historic precedent was one influence which helps to account for them; great personalities have played a part in their development; but beyond the historic precedent and the influence of personal leadership lies the more ultimate question of what part social conditions had in making the precedent subject to imitation at one time rather than at others and in enabling the great man to be a leader of the led and in determining his ideas. These sects are social movements as well as historic and religious. They represent the expression of ideas and ideals forced to birth from the matrix of the social body; ideas and ideals long dormant, perhaps, but now for the first time shaping themselves into definite form and becoming embodied in separate organizations. To change the figure, they are precipitations resulting from social conflicts, tolerations, and imitations; they obey certain laws of sequence; their appearance and decay are dependent upon the social conditions amid which they are set. Our problem

is to explain what social conditions are necessary for their birth, what are the social regularities according to which they grow up, and what causes them to decay; to find, if possible, social causes for their appearance, course of development, and decline. We shall indicate, so far as possible, what are the conditions prevailing among the social classes of the regions of their origin and what bearing these relations have upon the origin and development of sects. The social, political, and religious ideals must be noticed in order to discover what influence they had in this development. The search for the social bases of these ideas will then be in order.

SUGGESTIONS OF A SOLUTION

a) Unsatisfactory proposal.—Spencer, in his *Essays* (I:21) expresses the belief that sects are simply differentiations from an original homogeneous social structure. This is in line with his theory that evolution is from the homogeneous, undifferentiated to the heterogeneous, differentiated structure. This may be true, but it throws no light on the causes which in this case lead to this process; it does not answer the question, Under what circumstances will they evolve from the homogeneous, undifferentiated to the heterogeneous, differentiated structure?

b) Economic, political, and intellectual factors bearing upon the origin of sects.

1. Without doubt the state of economic advancement has influence on the development of religious sects. When economic society is so little developed that there is no surplus supply of the necessities of life, when all of man's energies must of necessity be devoted to those activities which have to do with the sustaining of life, there will be no sectarianism. Universal poverty, grinding and positive, breeds no dissent. There is no surplus energy to be devoted to such things. Bread, not the things of the spirit, dominates thought and activity in such cases. Religious revolt is characteristic of times when certain individuals have been able to free themselves from the necessity of ceaseless toil, and some part of a population has been able to

better its economic condition to such an extent that it has leisure for display. An aristocracy of leisure appears whose members live from the toil of the lower classes. The latter's conditions, perhaps no worse absolutely than hitherto, are worse relative to the condition of the leisure classes. The difference in economic position, or, at least, in economic opportunity, between the upper and the lower classes, therefore, will produce a condition favorable to opposition and dissent.

Moreover, at just this time of change from a static to a dynamic condition in economic affairs, the conditions favorable to sectarianism appear. If, however, the differences between rich and poor have been of long-continued duration and superiority and inferiority have been sanctioned by age and custom, sects cannot appear until some change in relative conditions is suddenly brought about, or leisure gives time to the lower classes for reflection as to the abstract injustice of their position. Then, if the economic condition of the lower economic classes is very bad, resistance will take the place of passivity. Whether opposition shall result in economic, political, or religious separatism depends on the interest which dominates the age. This, however, is but a proximate explanation.

2. Sects originate also in times of sudden change in the exercise of political power. So long as political conditions remain static, disturbances are not likely to occur. But let political authority be suddenly imposed more stringently than hitherto, and dissent of some sort will probably appear, whether it be in the Age of William the Norman in England, of Richelieu in France, or of Roosevelt in America. The outcome depends on the development of the theory of rights already reached.

This sudden increase of the exercise of political prerogative may be due to a desire for uniformity of belief, thought, and action consequent upon a growing national spirit, as, for example, in the days of the Tudors in England, or of Clay, Webster, and Lincoln in America. On the other hand, there may be no absolute increase of power, but the old authority may become more oppressive owing to an increase in general intelligence and a growth of the ideals of freedom, the latter due to

an increase of educational opportunities, increased discussion among the lower classes, or the borrowing of ideas from another country. For example, the increase of wealth in England immediately following the Industrial Revolution led to much social discontent. This was aggravated by the ideas of the French Revolution which had been introduced into England. Thus, despotism is favorable to the formation of sects in religion as of anarchistic parties in politics. Both are parties of protest; both make little of social organization; both thrive on class consciousness.

Sects originate generally in the lower classes which have been shut out from any part in the socializing process. While their origin is due to a sense of injustice, so far as they are organized they may represent an effort to provide an agency for accomplishing the felt necessity of socialization. This socialization, however, is not yet possible in the wider circle, called the state, for the state is the upper classes. Therefore, this sectarian organization is a society within a society to give scope to the socializing instincts struggling for expression. These classes are not represented in the state as it exists, consequently they organize themselves so as to be able to deal as classes with the upper classes.

3. Of necessity, there is always intellectual unrest before sects can arise. However, the conditions of intellectual unrest are to be found in increase of wealth, growth of political ideas, and social development. The new intellectual spirit was apparent in the days of the Protestant Revolt. The Italian Renaissance had introduced the ferment of new ideas. These had their influence in loosening the hold of the old ideas and creating intellectual unrest. Nevertheless, intellectual unrest was only one phase of the social discontent which was characteristic of the age. The general social dissatisfaction and craving for new ideas was at the bottom of the eagerness with which new intellectual interests were welcomed. The latter then reacted upon the social discontent. This formed the seed-bed in which the intellectual ideals found root.

A case in point is that of the Lollards in England in the fourteenth century. Lollardy in the person of Wyclif had

originated by a combination of several circumstances—great social discontent following the Black Death, with the bettered conditions of the lower classes consequent thereupon, and the jealousy of the growing power of the lower classes by the upper classes, especially by the church, a grave disturbance of social relations, and a great intellectual unrest, stimulated, however, by social discontent. The Renaissance did not come to England until later. As Green points out, Wyclif's chief debt intellectually was to Occam. But his protest was largely social in its origin—against the richness and profligacy of the priests and friars; and an appeal in behalf of the lower, uncared for, and abused under-classes. The selfishness of the English clergy “severed them from the nation at large.” Not only did Wyclif protest against them, but “without the ranks of the clergy stood a world of earnest men, who, like ‘Piers the Ploughman,’ denounced their worldliness and vice, skeptics like Chaucer laughing at the jingling bells of their hunting abbotts, and the brutal and greedy baronage under John of Gaunt, eager to drive the prelates from office and to seize on their wealth.”¹

Change in moral or theological ideas is conducive to the formation of sects. However, this only determines the character of the sect, which will vary in character according as the dominant interest is morality or religion.

c) *The fundamental factor in any social account of the origin of sects.*—More fundamentally, sects are the result of forces stimulated to activity by a heterogeneity of the population of any social group. This lack of unity in the group results in the development of class consciousness. This class consciousness may be due to the imperfect assimilation of population elements suddenly brought together, as in the period following the Norman Conquest, or as in the early days of America. A common blood tends to produce that likeness in thought, feeling, and purpose in a population which is inimical to sectarianism. But before such amalgamation can take place, if a policy of uniformity of religion is adopted, it leads to protest. Moreover, a common culture in time wipes out the differences which create disunion.

¹ Green, *Short History of the English People*, 237, 238.

But if, before such a culture has done its perfect work, an attempt is made by the authorities to hasten the process by a policy of repression of freedom of thought and a forced change of customs, the gulfs between the social classes appear, the process of socialization is stopped, and the oppressed classes become sectarians. This, because the old customs and traditions die more slowly than political forms. Religion being among the interests which man treats most conservatively, it is but natural that uniformity in religion comes about more slowly than in politics, or purely intellectual affairs. The sectarians are forced to segregate themselves by a consciousness of unlikeness between themselves and their oppressors and are drawn together by a sense of mental and moral kinship. Their meeting together, their discussion among themselves of these points of difference and likeness increases their difference from those oppressing them and cements their own bonds of brotherhood.² Persecution has ever been the best means of making certain the growth of the oppressed, provided the persecution was not thorough-going extermination. In every case, however, when persecution sets in, there exists social heterogeneity. Likemindedness has not been perfectly developed.

What, then, produces social unlikeness in a population? Generally it comes about either by way of conquest, which brings together people separated from each other by natural frontiers, or by migration. In either case contact of hitherto separated peoples stimulates consciousness of differences and excites conflicts. In the one case the conquerors form a superior class, if numerous, and the conquered become the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. Conquest only accentuates differences, and the conquered cling the more closely to their customs and religion. The conquerors have three methods open to them in dealing with the religion of the conquered. (1) They may exterminate it. This, however, is hardly ever practicable and never has been done completely. (2) They may adopt it wholly or in part. They

² "Persecution causes the persecuted to draw together, encourage one another, and associate only with one another. It closes them to the influences of reason and interest that otherwise would work upon them and win them over."
—Ross, *Social Psychology*, 303.

seldom do so wholly; generally they adopt part of it and many times the greater part. The conquerors do not exterminate the women and children as a rule; they preserve them and keep them as slaves. The women conservatively keep their religion and their children are taught the mother's religion. Therefore, in the second or third generation the religion of the conquerors is badly corrupted by the religion of the conquered. The barbarian conquerors of Christian Rome were conquered by the Christian religion. The latter had to adapt itself, of course, to the religion of the barbarians, as the Christianity of the later barbarians shows. So when the Catholic church went out in its mission to the barbarians who had not seen Rome, it was compelled to adapt its ceremonial and customs to their practices, and when at a later time Christianity was imposed by Christian princes upon barbarian peoples, as upon the Saxons, for example, the same thing was true. This is shown by the survivals from barbarian religions in Catholic festivals and in ceremonials of later times. (3) The conquerors may leave the conquered to the enjoyment of their religion. This policy is characteristic of modern times, as, for instance, of America and England. In this case, the religions, together with other differences between the conquerors and the conquered, will have free scope and at first will be very pronounced, as was the case in the conquest of India by the British, but in the course of time will gradually fade out entirely with growing social unity, unless the governing class emphasizes its superiority to the governed in other respects. Therefore, it becomes apparent that sectarianism in religion is a phenomenon incident to the mingling of hitherto strange peoples, destined to disappear as the process of socialization goes on.

The mingling of strange peoples presupposes, however, separation. It is dependent upon the physical nature of the country where the meeting occurs. It is evident that migrating peoples generally will not go into a country which is inaccessible or infertile; only those fleeing from enemies retire to such places. Therefore, the physical nature of a country will have much to do with the question as to whether it will produce sects or not. Natural frontiers occur everywhere, more numerous, however,

in some parts of the world than in others. Western Europe was especially suited by physical configuration to provide the segregation necessary to the development of different modes of life, ways of thinking, social customs, etc., which make people unlike, especially in the days when the only means of communication was by courier, and actual personal association was impeded. The fact that strange ways persist even today in certain parts shows how isolation preserves peculiarities. It has done so in all ages and in almost all countries.³ The isolation may be a consequence of either natural or social barriers to intercommunication. Hence, in an open fertile country, so easily accessible and fertile as to attract immigrants, that dynamic condition of society can develop which is necessary to produce the conflict of religions that breeds sectarianism; or, again, in a geographical unity whose various parts are kept separate by lack of means of communication and association there exist the conditions favorable to the formation of classes of people with different ideas and ideals.

Now, let this isolation be broken up; let these communities long separated and hence much unlike come into communication either through the development of means of transportation or of communication and association, by conquest or by migration; then conflict of ideas, of culture, of costumes, of customs, and of religious beliefs will occur.

Such breaking-up of social insularity occurred in southwestern Germany, in Switzerland, and in the Low Countries in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries; their differences in religion became apparent and conflict drew the lines of sect and party. Now when any two or more of these different causes coincide, the phenomena of sectarianism are sure to become very prominent. If only one of these causes is active, these social phenomena will be less numerous and less pronounced or lacking altogether.

The way in which this physical difference operates on society

³ Harnack (*Expansion of Christianity*, II, 357) says that lack of communication with the rest of the world retarded the historical evolution of the Christian church in central Asia Minor so that, "in its inland parts primitive Christianity survived longer than elsewhere."

is this: These different social elements come together and the resulting social heterogeneity brings out the mental unlikenesses, differences of feeling, of thinking, and of acting about matters that are in the zone of interest. These differences are recognized by the different elements of the population. This recognition makes them more prominent and pronounced. Conflict ensues. The superior classes attempt to coerce the inferior. If the superior class is an official class it tries to bring the lower class to its way of thinking and feeling by force and unless the force is of that severity which leads to extermination the inferior class becomes a sect, resisting the pretensions and the claims of the upper class. This resistance takes many different forms. It is not limited to the question in dispute. Hence we find among sectarians that their opposition to those whom they combat takes lines many and diverse. If the oppression is in the matter of social regulations it does not follow that the concerns on which the sects will resist and take a different line from the oppressors will be simply social. It may lead to economic differences or to a difference in customs or in religion, as the case may be. If the upper class is a learned class and the inferior class unlearned, the superior class will attempt to coerce the inferior by weight of authority, scorn, and ridicule. This will merely stimulate opposition on the part of those coerced. As a result of this coercion the lower classes will revolt against those in authority. In many cases sectarianism has been fostered by the upper classes so acting in economic and social affairs as to create a feeling of difference rather than of sympathy between the two.

An illustration of this principle is to be found in the conditions preceding the Peasants' War in Germany. Serfdom oppressed the people; there was a great social gulf between the owners and the tillers of the soil. The Reformation, which had been accepted by the lower classes as the charter of their liberties, social as well as religious, was divorced from popular sympathies by being delivered into the hands of the princes. When the lower orders of society failed to realize their hopes at the hands of the princes, they appealed to violence. At first Luther sided with the class from which he sprang. But the appeal to violence

alienated him from the popular side. From that moment the Reformation became an aristocratic movement. From that moment sectarianism had a reason for being. It represented more truly than the evangelical churches the interests of the masses.⁴ The twelve articles of the peasants contained demands for the correction of abuses mostly of a social nature.

When religion becomes the dominant interest this consciousness of difference between the classes is certain to appear in differences in religion. The history of the Reformation and post-Reformation times is replete with examples. The separatism of those times which resulted in the Anabaptist movement was the result of a consciousness of social differences, long continued but sharpened by the effort of the upper classes to coerce the lower in religious affairs. Testimony is given again and again that the artisan and the peasant classes were those among which the Anabaptist movement originated and where it achieved its greatest successes.⁵ The followers of Balthasar Hubmaier in Switzerland "were recruited from the artisan classes"; in Zürich "it required increasingly severe mandates of the authorities to suppress the strong popular movement in favor of the prescribed, unlicensed sect." The Peasants' Revolt in Germany, and also that in England, were by their very names of lower origin. The country parsons and priests were the only ones which joined with the peasants in their demands. The very articles of faith of the Swiss Baptists show that their chief troubles were social. Luther was a peasant, as were Zwingli and Fox. The Anabaptist circles of Germany were recruited from the peasant class. Almost every sect of Protestant Christendom has originated in the lower classes as a protest against what they felt was oppression by the superior classes. That their griefs were largely social is shown by their leaning toward apocalyptic hopes of a kingdom in which their wrongs would be righted; and the seriousness of their oppressions is indicated by the fact that they expected it to come suddenly. Their doctrines apart from this are mostly negative, another indication that they arose out of class consciousness.

⁴ *Hibbert Lectures* (1883), 200-201.

⁵ Moeller, *History of the Christian Church*, III, 64-65.

They protested against wearing rich clothing, an expression of their antipathy toward their rich oppressors. They refused to bear arms and to take the civil oath because the state was in the hands of the class against which they were reacting. The ban of excommunication was enforced to purify the church of its false members, a thing their opponents refused to do. Baptism of infants was condemned because it was the policy of their oppressors. A paid ministry was abominated because the ministers of the great churches belonged to the class they hated.⁶

Religious sects will arise only when religion is the dominant interest. When political interest predominates, political parties will spring up. Or, if the cultural interest is dominant, schools of thought are formed.

This social heterogeneity brings the innovator and the adherents of tradition and custom into conflict. In some matters the upper classes will be the adherents of tradition and custom, and in others the reverse will be true. For example, in the post-Reformation period, when most of our modern sects had their rise, we find that the upper classes were the innovators so far as religious ideas are concerned and the lower classes were the more conservative. Ritschl has pointed out that the Pietistic sects have their roots, so far as ideas go, in the Catholic Middle Ages, and they are essentially conservative. They have made no contribution to religious thought. Luther and his followers, on the other hand, promulgated new ideas. These new ideas

⁶Giddings observes (*Elements of Sociology*, 223-224), ". . . there is always danger that the governing circle may mistake its own ideas for what is politic, just, or wise in administration for the ideas of the general membership, and so create division and finally disruption.

"Illustrations of these truths may be drawn from every form of social organization. They have been most conspicuously demonstrated in such bodies as trade unions, business corporations, ecclesiastical societies, and political parties. The entire history of the Protestant church could be written from this point of view. It was because the governing hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church failed sufficiently to regard the convictions and the well-being of the entire body of its membership that the Protestant schism began. It was in like manner because the government-established churches, namely the Lutheran in Germany and the Episcopalian in England, failed to study the convictions and interests of their membership that further dissensions arose and the nonconformist bodies came into existence."

the lower classes were not able to comprehend. Hence, their ideas remained those with which they had been familiar. When Luther overthrew legalism in theology and substituted the conception of the free grace of God he was speaking above the experience of the masses and as a rule they were unable to follow him. Protestant though the latter were, they harked back to a pre-Protestant legalism. All they did was to substitute the legalism of apostolic Christianity and of the New Testament for Catholic legalism.

The claim of these sects to go back to apostolic and primitive Christianity and their appeal to the Bible, though perhaps not consciously so, was only an apologetic, or polemical, expedient to secure the assent of the conservative elements of society.⁷ And they have done so because, either consciously or unconsciously, they have appreciated the strength of their appeal to tradition, custom, and the old.

The same thing is true of lower stages of development. In the early civilization it has often happened that the old ancestral cults, or even the cults of nature-worship, have been outlawed by the new national religion, but the lower and naturally more conservative classes still have clung to them. As a consequence these old cults, allied to the more conservative instincts of the lower classes, have been pushed into hiding and semi-secrecy with the result that "piety" was synonymous with reverence for the earlier kind of religion—among the classic nations, for ancestor-worship. An example is to be found in the survival of the old idolatries among the lower classes of society in ancient Israel in spite of the supremacy of the new national religion of Jahweh, backed by the prophets. Thus, here again we see the lower classes as the more conservative adherents of tradition and custom in opposition to the upper classes, the promulgators of the new ideas. Again, the evangelical churches, as against the sects, held to the more recently developed ideas, while the sects reverted to the old ideas of brotherhood and fellowship current in apostolic and New Testament times, but

⁷ "Sect after sect of Protestants has proclaimed itself a restoration of apostolic Christianity."—Ross, *Social Psychology*, 281.

their opposition to the attitude of the upper classes was produced primarily by a sense of their unlikeness to those classes. They went back to the fellowship, to the ideas, to the practices, and to the form of organization of the primitive church because they felt themselves more like the people who held those ideas than like the people with whom they were in contact who held other ideas.

Another element entering into the rise of a religious sect is the eccentric man. Leaders have ever been indispensable to the formation of parties and sects. The leader gives expression to the felt sense of wrong, injustice, and oppression which his fellows feel but have not yet expressed. When such social conditions obtain, the man who appreciates their meaning first and who is able to give expression to the common sense of difference and who is able to suggest fellowship with another people and with the times and institutions more akin to his class—this man becomes a leader. In taking the leadership he is merely the mouthpiece of those who follow him. Ratzenhofer points out that “the sect only arises when intellectually influential individuals attain to a more or less definite answer to religious questions and elaborate formulas of faith which are enacted through rituals. . . . The sect is a means of social union and of political purpose.”⁸ Moreover, as James, speaking of the Protestant sects of the Reformation, observes, the reason why the sectarians follow the leadership of the founder of the sect, although their disregard of leadership in the cult from which they revolt is promoted by both the spirit of the gospel and the isolation of the times, is because the leader of the sect is of the same social class as they themselves and is more intimately known by them.⁹ He is the product of the conditions under which he lives and the only difference between him and the people whom he leads is his superior insight, his greater quickness of perception, and the deeper earnestness with which he feels the injustice of the conditions to which they all alike are subject. In such a case as this we have an example of the close relation between genius

⁸ *Soziologie, Positive Lehre von den menschlichen Wechselbeziehungen.*

⁹ *Varieties of Religion*, 371.

and eccentricity. Unsettled conditions of this sort give prominence alike to the man of genius and the "crank." The social unrest gives the "crank" his opportunity while oftentimes it serves to stimulate his unsocial habits. The very fact that he is out of joint with his time shows his anti-social attitude. He may be ahead of his time or he may be behind it. In the one case he is a Luther; in the other he is the leader of a backward-looking sect. This same social unrest makes the genius and enables his prophetic soul to voice the inarticulate longings of others less gifted than himself. In the time when social unrest is prominent, leadership is at a premium. The unusual man is in demand. The influence of this man in turn exercises a controlling influence in the affairs of the sect. His genius may be able to divert the sect far from its original purpose, or on the other hand, the socializing influences about him may lessen the differences between him and those against whom he is in opposition.

That this manner of accounting for the origin of sects is the correct one is shown by the light it throws upon their doctrines and practices. In the beginning their tenets are negative in their origin. They do *not* swear, do *not* take arms, do *not* wear gaudy clothing or ornaments, do *not* baptize infants, and do *not* have church sacraments. Then gradually they build up a body of positive doctrines and practices which easily can be seen to have been brought into the circle of social consciousness by their opposition to the social class holding the other doctrines.

Again, the conflict of sects, often much alike in their tenets, is explicable by these same principles of social life. Originating or developing in places separated from each other, later on they come into contact. This contact induces conflict, even though they hold much the same views on theological and ecclesiastical questions. This shows once more that this conflict is social rather than religious or theological in nature. Examples are furnished by the acrimonious debates carried on and the antipathy felt for each other by such sects as the Mennonites and Dunkers at Germantown, Pennsylvania, in the early history of

their settlement there; and the mutual opposition of the Lutherans and Reformed in Pennsylvania in its early history.

This conflict of sects is an illustration of what Ward calls "social synergy," i.e., unconscious working-together toward a higher social state by assimilation of ideals through conflict.¹⁰ This conflict prepares the way for toleration. Thus, in England under the Tudors, who early pursued the policy of unification of the English people in religion, three lines of thought were moving toward and preparing the way for toleration, viz., the Independents with independent congregations not to be meddled with by a state church; the Quakers with an individual conscience not to be coerced by others; and the Platonists, Latitudinarians, and Unitarians who held reason uppermost, as against tradition. It finally led to the *Agreement of the People* of 1649 in which the position was taken that all sects were to be tolerated. This failed of national adoption by reason of the coalition of the two parties who had never been in favor of toleration, the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians.

What account does this sociological theory give of the lessening hostility of the sects in America in these later years of history?

In the early days one sect fought another with the same energy with which they had once antagonized the established churches in Europe, and only less violently. That, as has been indicated, was due to social heterogeneity. The condition of heresy and anarchy is one of social heterogeneity combined with the exercise of despotic power in the effort to produce uniformity of thought, custom, costume, creed, dogma, fashion, or political form of government. In times of social heterogeneity faith is strong both in those in authority and those oppressed. With the growth of social likeness, and therefore of tolerance, the certainty of faith gives way to general indifference and doubt. Social homogeneity produces social tolerance in every realm; religious differences, as well as all other social variation, tend to disappear, but with this tolerance goes doubt, questioning, and the failure of earnest faith.

¹⁰ *Am. Jour. Soc.*, January, 1908, 440.

While that isolation due to social unlikeness and lack of communication and association produced faith and a sense of brotherhood and a unity within the sect uncommon now, it resulted in a narrowness of sympathy, a limitation of social consciousness which was to be deprecated from the standpoint of the greater social unit, the nation. It developed an intensity of conviction and a fraternity which were good so far as they went and doubtless prepared the way for further socialization. Its limitation was its narrow extent.

With changing social conditions, however, all this has been altered. The isolated communities no longer exist, except in a few parts of the country, like the Kentucky mountains, Amana, and such social communities still shut off from the world by artificial barriers ultimately doomed to fall. The railroad, the telephone, and the mail route have done away with the conditions which fostered peculiar community developments. The mountains have been tunneled, roads have been built, telephones installed, expositions have drawn together people of scattered communities, industry has become a bond of unity. Communication, association, acquaintanceship, have made people more alike, as well as more conscious of their likenesses. Science is dispelling our superstitions, education is making the intellectual heritage of man ours, and a social homogeneity is displacing the former social heterogeneity.

Therefore, whether a society shall have sects or not is determined by the homogeneity of that society in mental and moral traits. This condition, in turn, depends upon the degree to which the process of socialization has gone on. This again is contingent upon the physical configuration, and the natural endowment of the region together with the advances of civilization which there have been reached.

What the future holds in store for the sects is clearly indicated by what has been said. If the past tendency toward assimilation and unity in blood, thought, and activity continues, doubtless we shall see the present tendency of religious sects to unite culminate in the lessening of the number by consolidation of similar sects. More and more the agreements will be empha-

sized, the differences ignored, until the growing social unity shall have found expression in more or less complete ecclesiastical unity.

On the other hand, there are some evidences that, while ethnic unity may come to pass, industrial, economic, and social unity has begun to suffer. Growing wealth has struck lines of cleavage through our population. This is giving us social classes based not on blood, but on money, culture, and social position. There is good reason to suppose that these class distinctions will find their expression in the continuance of certain great ecclesiastical organizations, which represent such social distinctions, and that new ones will be organized to meet the needs of classes not met by the present organizations. The churches of the future will, as in the past, reflect the social conditions of our people. At the meeting of the Sociological Society of America in 1907 the discussion brought out the general agreement among sociologists that the unifying tendency present from the beginning of our American people will be halted along lines herein indicated. Sects there will be so long as there are social classes with a pronounced consciousness of difference and likeness. They will disappear when, and only when, the social homogeneity of our people shall extend not only to blood but to those subtler elements of likeness—thought, feeling, and volition, through community of interest and equality of opportunity.